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ABSTRACT

In this study, two hypotheses were tested: (1) Self-report data are unrelated to behavior change; (2) Exposure to competent models of open and helpful behavior increases this skill performance in an encounter group. Two encounter groups were conducted with 18 college students who had the incentive to become more open, honest, and helpful. One group was presented with 1-hour of microlab activities; the other, 1-hour of video tape with instructions and modeling of open and helpful behavior. The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) was administered before, following, and 3 weeks after each group. Behavioral rating forms for openness and helping were used 50 minutes of each hour by trained raters. The POI data indicated that all participants reported significant change in the positive direction. No significant differences between groups were evident. Although self report data reflected no level effects, behavioral data reflected significant overall level effects on both combined openness and combined helping. The results of the study supported the hypotheses. Six references and 5 tables are included. (Author)

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## ABSTRACT

Encounter Groups and Change: Behavioral or Self Report Data? Behavioral data on encounter groups and change seems to support a social-competence deficit hypothesis. Bandura (1969) asserts that incentive, modeling and detailed coding are basic to learning complex social skills. Two encounter groups were conducted with 18 college students. One included an hour of micro lab activities, the other one hour of video tape with instructions and modeling of open and helping behaviors. The POI was administered prior to, following and three weeks after each group. Behavioral rating forms for openness and helping were used 50 minutes of each hour via a one-way window by trained raters. The POI data indicated that all participants reported significant change in the positive direction. No significant differences between groups was evident. When subjects were divided into high and low on the basis of emitted open and helping behaviors, those who scored high behaviorally scored low on two of the POI scales. Comparisons made by sub categories of open and helping behaviors showed differences related to treatment effects. The humanistic group was significantly higher than the behavioral group on empathy while the behavioral group showed a marked increase in reassurance after the video-tape. Although self-report data reflected no level effects, behavioral data reflected significant overall level effects on both combined openness and combined helping. The results of the study support the hypotheses that behavioral data and self-report data are not congruent and raises question about using self-report data as support for the contention that encounter groups result in positive mental growth.

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# ENCOUNTER GROUPS AND CHANGE: BEHAVIORAL OR SELF-REPORT DATA?

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Some (e.g., Guinan & Foulds, 1970; Young and Jacobson, 1970), from a perceptual standpoint, contend that positive self-report data from encounter groups indicates that such an experience increases mental health. From a behavioral standpoint, Meador (1971) found participants moving toward more acceptance of direct "experiences of feelings," towards what Rogers (1967) calls, the fully functioning person. Another behavioral study found somewhat different results. Sage (1971) looked at two behavioral clusters--"openness and helping," and found that a competence/deficit hypothesis best predicted individual performance; that levels of social competence were reliably identified within a few hours in an encounter group; and such levels of behavior were relatively stable throughout the group experience.

The present study seeks to reduce the apparent discrepancy between self-report studies and a behavioral study (Sage, 1971) on encounter groups: (1) more elaborate behavioral measures of openness and helping were developed to increase the likelihood of finding change than used by Sage (1971); (2) a self-report measure, a measure of self-actualizing tendencies, used by Guinan and Foulds (1970) and Young and Jackson (1970) was used to find whether reported-change is congruent with behavioral-change; and (3) a behavioral modeling approach (Bandura, 1969) was applied within an encounter group based on "social learning principles" (Bandura, 1969)--i.e., learning complex social skills such as openness and helping requires an "incentive," "modeling," and "detailed coding."

It was hypothesized that: (1) self-report data are unrelated to behavior-change; and (2) exposure to competent models of openness and helping behaviors increases such skill performance in an encounter group.

## METHODOLOGY

Subjects. The Ss were 18 college student volunteers screened for incentive to become open, honest and helpful, and psychiatric problems.

Experimental manipulations. Each of two groups met over a two day period of 25 hours. During the 5th hour one group, called humanistic, experienced a microlab (non-verbal exercises), and the other group, called behavioral, was shown a video-tape of a peer-encounter group where openness and helping behavior were competently exhibited and accompanied by detailed instructions.

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Instruments. The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI; Shostrom, 1963), a measure of self-actualization, was administered prior to, immediately following and three weeks after each group. Behavioral rating forms for openness and helping behaviors, developed for this study, had estimated reliabilities by Behavioral subcategories from .64 to .91. Ratings were made for 50 minutes of each hour via a one-way window.

Statistical Comparisons. The POI data was analyzed by a two-factor analysis of variance. Comparisons were made for group, stage (24 hours were broken into six 4 hour stages) and level. Levels of openness and helping behaviors were made by dividing Ss within each group into high and low based on emitted behaviors during the first four hours of each group, a baseline period. The behavioral ratings were analyzed by a three-factor analysis of variance for open and helping behaviors by group, stage and level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As Table 1 indicates, all participants, regardless of treatment, reported significant change in the positive direction of the POI (10 out of 12 scales) following the groups. There were no significant differences between groups on any of the POI scales and a group by stage interaction was evident on only one scale, Acceptance of Aggression. Significant level effects, based on emitted helping behaviors, were found on only two scales, Self-Regard and Self-Acceptance. On both scales the low level Ss (low in emitted helping behaviors) scored lower. Division of Ss into high and low level on the basis of emitted open behaviors was significant on only two scales, Self-Actualizing and Self-Regard. In both instances, those who were higher on such emitted behaviors scored lower on the POI scales. A finding somewhat reminiscent of the "repressor-sensitizer" research, and other personality measurement lore, i.e., persons who report themselves in a more positive light on self-report measures tend to talk less about their feelings and show more concern for others. Also, relevant was the finding that the correlation between overall emitted openness and helping behaviors was a non-significant —.16. Essentially, two life styles emerged, one who openly talks about feelings, and another who seeks to help and understand others, the orientation of the "sensitizer" and "repressor" respectively (Byrne, 1964).

The behavioral rating of openness and helping behaviors, in Table 2, showed significant level effects, supporting a competence/deficit hypothesis, while only helping behaviors overall showed a stage effect, i.e., irrespective of group observation of the means showed a temporary increase after treatment interventions. When comparisons were made by subcategories of openness and helping behaviors, differences related uniquely to treatment effects emerged. The humanistic group was significantly higher than the behavioral group in empathy, although quite variable. The behavioral group showed a marked increase in reassurance after the behavioral modeling.

As seen in Table 1, although self-report data tended to reflect almost no level effects, behavioral data reflected significant overall level effects in both combined openness and combined helping as well as a group by level

interaction on the subcategory of personal openness.

The results of this study support the hypothesis that behavioral data and self-report data are not congruent. This raises serious question about using self-report data as support for the contention that encounter groups result in positive mental growth, at least within the process of the group itself.

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Table 1. Results of Two Factor Analysis of Variance With Repeated Measures on one Factor for Pre-/ Post-/ and Post-Post/ POI Data.

| Scale | Comparison: Humanistic vs. Behavioral | Helping Hi/Lo | Openness Hi/Lo |
|---|---|---|---|
| Time Competence | Stage ** | Stage ** | Stage ** |
| Inner Directed | Stage *** | Stage *** | Stage *** |
| Self Actualizing | Stage ** | Stage ** | Stage ** |
| | | | Level * |
| Existentiality | Stage *** | Stage *** | Stage *** |
| Feeling Reactivity | Stage *** | Stage *** | Stage *** |
| Spontaniety | Stage *** | Stage *** | Stage *** |
| Self Regard | | Level * | Level ** |
| Self Acceptance | Stage *** | Stage *** | Stage *** |
| | | Level * | |
| Nature of Man | | | |
| Synergy | Stage ** | Stage ** | Stage ** |
| Acceptance of Aggression | Stage *** | Stage *** | Stage *** |
| | Group X Stage ** | | |
| Capacity for Intimate Contact | Stage *** | Stage *** | Stage *** |

* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$
*** $p < .01$

Table 2. Results of Three Factor Analysis of Variance on Behavioral Ratings for Group by Level by Stage for Openness and Helping Behaviors.

| Measure | Comparison: Humanistic vs. Behavioral | High vs. Low |
|---|---|---|
| Openness | | Level ** |
| Objective Openness | | Level * |
| Personal Openness | | Group X Level * |
| Helping Behavior | Stage ** | Level ** |
| Cognitive Helping | | Level ** |
| Affective Helping | Group ** | |
| | Group X Stage ** | |
| Reassuring Helping | Stage ** | |
| | Group X Stage ** | |

** $p < .05$
* $p < .10$

POI Data
Group X Stage Anova

| Variable | Means Occassions I | II | III | Comparison | F Test | Df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time Competence | 15.9 | 17.9 | 17.3 | stage p<.05 | 3.44 | 2/28 |
| Inner Directed | 88.1 | 95.8 | 98.3 | stage p<.01 | 15.14 | 2/28 |
| Self-Actualizing | 80.2 | 20.4 | 21.5 | stage p<.05 | 3.49 | 2/28 |
| Existentiality | 21.9 | 24.3 | 25.1 | stage p<.01 | 7.69 | 2/28 |
| Feeling Reactivety | 17.4 | 19.7 | 19.3 | stage p<.01 | 17.00 | 2/28 |
| Spontineity | 13.1 | 14.7 | 14.6 | stage p<.01 | 6.58 | 2/28 |
| Self-regard | 11.8 | 12.1 | 12.4 | stage -n.s. | .81 | 2/28 |
| Self Acceptance | 15.6 | 18.5 | 18.6 | stage p<.01 | 12.15 | 2/28 |
| Nature of man, constructive | 12.5 | 12.4 | 13.3 | stage n.s. | 2.36 | 2/28 |
| Synergy | 7.1 | 7.6 | 7.9 | stage p<.05 | 4.58 | 2/28 |
| Acceptance of Aggression | 16.6 | 18.2 | 18.8 | stage p<.01 | 8.20 | 2/28 |
| Humanistic | 15.4 | 18.4 | 18.6 | Group X | | |
| Behavior | 17.9 | 18.0 | 18.9 | Stage p<.05 | 3.87 | 2/28 |
| Capacity for Intimate Contact | 19.1 | 21.6 | 21.4 | stage p<.01 | 10.52 | 2/28 |

A rather overwhelming self-reported change, in that 11 of the 12 variables showed a significant increase. In some instances, the increase following the group experience was maintained, and in others, continued to increase.